

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 AID-05 HA-05 IO-13 /099 W

-----127795 020720Z /11

R 271340Z APR 78 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9409

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 4197

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGE: PINS, PINT, PGOV, MORG, CG

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MOBUTU ADDRESSES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REF: A) KINSHASA 3774; B) KINSHASA 2614; C) KINSHASA 2210

1. SUMMARY: HAVING DECLARED APRIL 24 AS "PARLIAMENT DAY", PRESIDENT MOBUTU TOOK THE OCCASSION TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THE MAJORITY OF DISMISSED OFFICERS WERE FROM THE KASAI, HE VIGOROUSLY DENIED ANY TRIBAL BIAS. MOBUTU BLENDED CRITICISM OF CERTAIN UNNAMED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS WITH LUKEWARM PRAISE FOR THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE, AND ANNOUNCED MEASURES WHEREBY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COULD POSE WRITTEN QUESTIONS WHICH HE WOULD ANSWER ORALLY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAS SIX OBJECTIVES IN ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL. FIRST OF ALL, HE WISHED TO DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE MOBUTU PLAN. HE DID SO IN OPTIMISTIC BUT UNREMARKABLE TERMS. SECONDLY, HE SAID THAT HE WISHED TO

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REINFORCE THE LINKS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. TO DO SO HE INVITED MEMBERS TO FORM IMMEDIATELY A COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH SELECTING TOPICS ON WHICH THEY FELT THE NEED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

AFTER APPROPRIATE STUDY OF THE ISSUES RAISED, MOBUTU WOULD INVITE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABOARD THE PRESIDENTIAL YACHT IN ORDER TO HEAR HIS EXPLANATIONS AND REPORT BACK TO THE LEGISLATIVE

COUNCIL. ACCORDING TO ONE MEMBER, MOBUTU'S SUGGESTION THAT THIS PROCEDURE BE MADE A REGULAR PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE, WAS GREETED WITH ENTHUSIASM AS AN INDICATION THAT HE IS BEGINNING TO TAKE THE LEGISLATURE SERIOUSLY.

3. THE THIRD ANNOUNCED PRESIDENTIAL OBJECTIVE WAS TO DESCRIBE CERTAIN RULES OF CONDUCT WHICH HE FELT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS SHOULD OBSERVE IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES: "NO CONFLICTS WHETHER LATENT OR DECLARED SHOULD EXIST BETWEEN THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONERS (I.E., DEPUTIES) AND TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES." A FOURTH OBJECTIVE IN SOMEWHAT THE SAME VEIN WAS TO REMIND LEGISLATORS OF CERTAIN DEMANDS WHICH THE PRESIDENT FELT STEMMED FROM THEIR LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, MOBUTU LEFT NO DOUBT THAT HE FELT THAT MANY DEPUTIES HAD FAILED IN THEIR DUTY TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. EVEN HIS PRAISE WAS LUKEWARM: "YOUR WORK IS GENERALLY SATISFACTORY. PUTTING ASIDE THAT INSUBORDINATE SPIRIT NORMAL TO ANY PARLIAMENT WHICH HAS AT TIMES CHARACTERIZED SOME REMARKS OF CERTAIN AMONG YOU, IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE RESULTS OF YOUR DELIBERATIONS TAKEN AS A WHOLE HONOR THE MPR."

4. THE HEART OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO ADDRESSING HIS REMAINING TWO OBJECTIVES: EXPLAINING THE ONGOING DISMISSALS IN THE SECURITY SERVICES (REF A) AND DEFENDING HIMSELF FROM CHARGES OF TRIBALISM AND REGIONALISM. MOBUTU BEGAN THIS PORTION OF HIS SPEECH BY REFERRING WITH PRIDE TO THE COUP
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PLOT TRIAL (REF B), WHICH HE CLAIMED HAD BEEN CONDUCTED IN AN EXEMPLARY MANNER. A LETTER WRITTEN BY ONE OF THOSE EXECUTED HAD, THE PRESIDENT SAID, INDICATED THAT MANY FAZ MEMBERS NOT ARRESTED WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSPIRACY. THIS HAD FORCED HIM TO "PURGE" THE SECURITY SERVICES OF THOSE WHO HAD ESCAPED TRIAL AND SENTENCING BUT WHOSE LOYALTY WAS DOUBTFUL. HOWEVER, THOSE DISMISSED WERE GIVEN SIX MONTHS SALARY IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THEIR CONVERSION TO OTHER LINES OF WORK. MOBUTU EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE THAT THIS NECESSARY ACTION HAD LED TO CHARGES OF TRIBALISM AND REGIONALISM BEING DIRECTED AGAINST HIM. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE EXPECTED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO DEFEND HIS GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO JUSTIFY THEM.

5. COMMENT: MOBUTU'S ANNOYANCE AT THE FAILURE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THE PURGE APPEARS TO BE SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUS. REF A NOTED THAT APPROXIMATELY 12 PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE OFFICER CORPS OF THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES HAD BEEN DISMISSED, THAT NO WORD OF THE PURGE HAD APPEARED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA, AND THAT RUMORS ABOUNDED. A COMMON MOBUTU TACTIC TO LEND GREATER CREDENCE TO HIS VERSION OF GOVERNMENT ACTIONS IS TO BEGIN BY ENFORCING STRICT SILENCE ON THE LOCAL MEDIA. THEN, AFTER THE RUMOR MILLS

HAVE WORKED OVERTIME, HE ANNOUNCES THE "TRUTH" ABOUT WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE. IN SO DOING HE DENOUNCES THE SO-CALLED "SIDEWALK RADIO" (RADIO TROTTOIR) FOR MISREPRESENTING NORMAL AND REASONABLE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. HE EMPLOYED THIS TACTIC EARLIER THIS YEAR TO PUBLICIZE THE GOVERNMENT'S VERSION OF WHAT HAPPENED IN BANDUNDU (REF C) AND NOW APPEARS TO HAVE DONE SO AGAIN TO EXPLAIN THE PURGES IN FAZ.

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINSHASA 4197

6. ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF DENOUNCING RUMOR MONGERS IS THAT ONE CAN PICK WHICH STORIES TO RUFUTE AND WHICH TO IGNORE. PRESIDENT MOBUTU EXPLOITED THIS POSSIBILITY IN DEFENDING HIMSELF AGAINST ACCUSATIONS OF TRIBALISM AND REGIONALISM. AFTER CLAIMING THAT THE GREATEST NUMBER OF THOSE FAZ OFFICERS DISMISSED WERE FROM THE KASAI, HE RECITED A LONG LIST OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE KASAI WHO REMIAN IN RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS OF HIGH TRUST, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S BODYGUARD AND MOST OF THE TOP OFFICIALS AT HIS PERSONAL RETREAT AT GHADOLITE. THIS, HE SAID, PROVED THAT HE WAS ABOVE ACTING AGAINST MEMBERS OF CERTAIN TRIBES OR REGIONS.

7. THE PRESIDENT CHOSE NOT TO ADDRESS WIDESPREAD REPORTS THAT MANY OF THE OFFICERS DISMISSED ACTUALLY CAME FROM SHABA REGION RATHER THAN FROM THE KASAI. ACCORDING TO A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATURE FROM BANDUNDU REGION, MOBUTU SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED THE KASAI IN RESPONSE TO A WRITTEN QUESTION FROM KASAI DEPUTIES

CONCERNING THEPURGE. DEPUTIES FROM SHABA, ON THE OTHER HAND,
REQUESTED A PRIVATE MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WHICH HAS
NOT YET TAKEN PLACE. ALTHOUGH THIS EXPLANATION APPEARS PLAUSIBLE,
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THE ABSENCE OF ANY REFERENCE IN THE SPEECH TO THE SHABA
REGION AND PARTICULARLY TO ITS LUNDA TRIBESMEN MAY FOSTER YET
ANOTHER RUMOR: THAT THE PRESIDENT DELIBERATELY CHOSE NOT TO
APPEAR IMPARTIAL REGARDING THE PERENNIALY DISAFFECTED REGION
OF SHABA.
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